

EXECUTIVE SECRET, AT
ROUTING SLIP

Memo Churno

TO:

		ACTION	INFO	DATE	INITIAL
1	DCI	<i>RD</i>	X		
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9	Chm/NIC	X			
10	GC				
11	IG				
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17	NIO/AF		X		
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Remarks

To 9: NIO/AF may want to comment, but basically this is provided FYI

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Date

3637 (10-81)



Executive Registry**86- 2666**


11 June 1986

MEMORANDUM FOR: National Intelligence Officer for Africa

FROM: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: NSDD-208: United States Policy toward the Southwest Indian Ocean

The attached comes from Ambassador Keating who has left Madagascar to become the next U.S. Executive Director of the World Bank.


William J. Casey

Attachment:
Memo from Ambassador Robert B. Keating

FM AMBASSADOR ROBERT B. KEATING
AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO - ANTAN 1095/200723Z MAR 86

TO SEC STATE WASH DC
NSC WASH DC
USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI

SUBJECT: NSDD-208: WE MUST DO BETTER

PART ONE OF TWO

I have studied NSDD-208, "United States Policy toward the Southwest Indian Ocean," and I am dismayed by its inadequacies. Even its title is grammatically incorrect. My disappointment in this flawed document is almost enough to make me give up my attempt to have this region be placed in its proper strategic context. The original study terms of reference promised a thorough examination of regional issues and their concomitant implications for US policy-making; an expectation that was heightened by the inordinately long time taken for the study (I first proposed a policy review of this region at the end of October 1983 and it finally emerged at the end of January 1986). It is clear to me that the analytical scaffolding erected by the SWIO Inter-Agency Study Group under State management was the flimsiest of structures. It certainly did not bear the weight of the specific concerns and questions raised in our embassy seminal thinking on the subject (Refs A and B). Before expounding in Part Two on the acute need for more overall logic in the formulation of regional policies and goals, I shall cite some of the more glaring weaknesses of NSDD-208.

Page 1, Paragraph 1: "With the exception of Mauritius, these island nations are also potentially unstable, with present leadership based more on personality than on traditional or constitutional institutions."

Comment: Whatever happened to the three mainland states of Mozambique, Tanzania and Kenya which by NSDD definition also comprise the SWIO? They are also "potentially unstable." Moreover, why are these three littoral SWIO states ignored throughout the NSDD?

Page 1, Paragraph 2 and Page 2, Paragraph 2: "Overall US interests in the region are relatively modest." "In contrast, South Africa has publicly stated that it is no longer able to take responsibility for defense of sea lanes around the tip of Africa."

Comment: These two statements are in conflict, one with the other. If South Africa is no longer able to defend shipping around the Cape, how is it possible to contend that overall US interests in SWIO are relatively modest? The Cape route has one of the highest densities of merchant shipping on the surface of the globe (over 28,000 ships transit the Cape each year, of which 2,800 are oil tankers). The United States, Western Europe, and Japan are heavily dependent upon free passage around the Cape of vital oil and mineral shipments. Sea lanes from the east coast of India, the Malacca Strait, and western Australia all converge in the region between Durban and Cape Town. Moreover, the Cape provides an alternative to the Red Sea and Suez Canal route should the latter be blocked. As a major choke point, the Cape route itself is also vulnerable to covert interdiction of shipping which would be both difficult to detect and cheap (e.g., recent

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mining in Red Sea). Even a temporary disruption of oil and mineral supplies could have serious adverse effects upon industrial and military materiel production of the US and its allies.

Page 1, Paragraph 2: "However, the area is strategically important to the US because it serves as a zone of transit for western military and commercial vessels, including oil tankers moving between the Persian Gulf and Western Europe or the US, and secondarily because of the presence of valuable mineral resources in southern Africa and Madagascar."

Comment: This is yet another statement that does not comport with the assertion that overall US interests in SWIO are relatively modest. It is also a calculation that ignores the critical importance of southern African strategic minerals to the industrialized economies of the free world. The Republic of South Africa and other southern African countries regularly ship enormous quantities of strategic minerals from their east coast ports to the United States, Western Europe and Japan. The United States is almost 100 per cent dependent on imports of some two dozen strategic minerals (e.g., South Africa supplies 55 per cent of our chromium, 49 per cent of our platinum, 47 per cent of our vanadium, 39 per cent of our ferro-manganese, and 31 per cent of our manganese ore; Zaire and Zambia provide us with 49 per cent of our cobalt, the bulk of which is carried to east coast ports in South Africa).

Page 2, Paragraph 1: "In contrast, Soviet military operational access to the area is limited to ship visits to the Seychelles by the Soviet Indian Ocean naval squadron."

Comment: Soviet naval ships also visit Mauritius, Mozambique, and Tanzania. Moreover, in early 1985, the Soviets staged two IL-38's through South Yemen to Mozambique. And what about Soviet oceanographic research in the waters off Madagascar, Mauritius, Tanzania and the Seychelles? Their mapping of ocean floors and submarine channels and currents in SWIO are an integral part of Soviet naval preparations.

Page 2, Paragraph 1: "While not one of high priority, the Soviets have nonetheless pursued an active policy in the region."

Comment: This is a contradiction in terms. Moreover, who knows what Soviet priorities are? In planetary terms, Soviet priorities for this region may be low, but it is equally undeniable that this region may now hold a prime spot on the Soviet chessboard as a target of strategic opportunity, particularly as the situation in southern Africa worsens.

Page 2, Paragraph 1: "All four island nations and three mainland littoral states are well placed for support of Soviet naval forces and for surveillance of US combatants in the southwest Indian Ocean."

Comment: I do not know what is meant by "US combatants in the southwest Indian Ocean," but it may mean US naval ships in SWIO. If so, why are French, British and Australian naval ships excluded from Soviet surveillance when their presence also represents western military strength in the region?

Page 2, Paragraph 1: "Soviet economic assistance is meager."

Comment: Why disparage Soviet economic assistance in SWIO? The Soviets are giving more economic assistance than we in the Seychelles, Madagascar, Mozambique and Tanzania, and offering more than we in the Comoros.

Their economic assistance is concentrated in highly visible showcase projects which feature the continuous presence of Soviet teachers, engineers, geologists and other technicians. And they continue to give large numbers of scholarships to students throughout the region for study in the USSR and other socialist countries.

Page 3, Paragraph 1: "The Soviets have sought access to Malagasy naval and air facilities, including Antsiranana, but Ratsiraka has not waived from a policy of denying access to combat vessels from non-Indian Ocean littoral nations."

Comment: Assuming that the word "wavered" rather than "waivered" was meant in the clause concerning Ratsiraka's policy of non-access to other than Indian Ocean littoral-nation naval ships, I would point out that a French navy helicopter/training ship and a French navy frigate recently visited Antsiranana and Taomasina.

Page 3, Paragraph 3: Comoros - "US interests in the Comoros largely parallel those of the French, who are in a position to ensure that any replacement for Abdallah is acceptable to the West. Therefore, the US should continue to coordinate with the French, without abandoning a recognizably independent policy."

Comment: The assumption that the French can call the shots in Comoros and hand-pick Abdallah's successor flies in the face of Comoran and French political realities. I have cautioned against pinning our hopes on survival of the Abdallah regime, but I have also underscored that the French cannot guarantee that any successor they may place on the throne would be as resistant to Soviet blandishments as Abdallah is, or as able to stave off mounting pressures from radical Comoran elements to accept Soviet offers of an embassy and aid (Ref C). In brief, I do not so fully depend on the French to control Comoran political events, to keep the Soviets out, and to assure our national security interests at that critical choke point along the Mozambique channel. To help forestall Soviet designs on these strategically located islands, we should provide them with a judicious mixture of inexpensive development and security assistance. Then we can say that we're also moving towards a recognizably independent US policy for Comoros.

Page 4: US Regional Goals - "Our paramount interest in the southwest Indian Ocean area is to maintain US access, while at the same time denying Soviet naval and air access." "US strategic goals include: ...curtailment or at least containment of Soviet political and military influence in the area."

Comment: The first statement states that our chief concern in the region is to maintain US access while denying the Soviets naval and air access. The second tells us that a strategic goal is to reduce or at least contain Soviet political and military influence in the region. Is our primary goal that of reducing Soviet influence or not?

FM AMBASSADOR ROBERT B. KEATING
AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO - ANTAN 1166/200730Z MAR 86

TO SEC STATE WASH DC
NSC WASH DC
USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI

SUBJECT: NSDD-208: WE MUST DO BETTER

PART TWO OF TWO

WHAT WENT WRONG WITH NSDD-208

NSDD-208's egregious errors and facile conclusions reveal its lack of analytical underpinning for key policy judgments. The absence of systemic analyses to help set regional strategies is a chronic deficiency of much of our foreign policy planning, but it was particularly evident in the supporting studies for the SWIO interagency review (e.g., NIE 30/70-82 of April '85 and AF's draft on SWIO NSDD of September '85).

Strikingly similar, these SWIO studies inventoried the countries in the region, asserted low priorities for each, and then predicted a continuation of present conditions. None of them attempted any kind of policy-related methodology such as "gross-impact analysis" to help trace out the casual relationships by which events in one country trigger reactions in others. None asked tough "what if" questions nor presented "worst case/best case" scenarios. Lamentably, they made no attempt to set forth possible guidelines for low-cost containment of Soviet actions in the region.

Because no effort was made either in these studies or by the SWIO Inter-Agency Study Group to delineate linkages among foreseeable future developments in the region, and between the region and southern Africa, there is no analytical basis for forecasting when and where American influence in the region might be enhanced or diminished relative to potential events and political scenarios. Although we specifically asked for it (Ref B), the SWIO Study Group also failed to pair, in any paradigmatic way, our national security interests and goals with available resources, or to analyze trade-offs between economic and security assistance programs.

The end result of this myopic approach is an NSDD that does not enlighten us as to the best way to apportion our limited means in preempting Soviet advantage and in supporting US strategies within this troubled region. We are left not with a prescription for reducing Soviet influence in the region (and we applaud CINCPAC's attempt to formulate one in its two-day SWIO conference of December 1983), but rather with a quiescent and negative policy of strategic denial which adjures us to but contain the Soviets.

Does such a passive posture protect our interests in SWIO? I think not. In our essay, "Sorting Out Regional Goals" (Ref B), we said, "The region's difficulties can be seen along the littoral in the economic catastrophe of Tanzania, the spreading insurgency in Mozambique, and the spectre of race war in South Africa. Among the islands, the Comoros are jolted by coup

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plots, Madagascar sways unsteadily in economic doldrums, while Seychellois power struggles play into Soviet hands. Even democratic Mauritius has trouble melding fractious politics into the exigencies of nationhood." We contend that things are not going to remain the same in this corner of the globe, and that the Soviets will not be held at bay by a passive strategy.

Moreover, instability in this region is not remote from the political turmoil of southern Africa. The broad band of political turbulence along the Tropic of Capricorn from SWIO island-states through the lands of southern Africa to the Atlantic coast may well cause realignments of power vectors. Moscow is pressing hard to extend its influence throughout this zone. The Soviets already supply more military assistance to SWIO states than the United States provides to all of sub-Saharan Africa, and their beneficence permits them to dominate the bilateral security dimensions of most of the SWIO states. Should the Soviet Union succeed in its designs on the perimeter lands of Angola, Namibia, South Africa, Mozambique and Tanzania, then the impact on already fearful leaders of other countries in southern Africa and adjacent SWIO islands would be devastating.

How do we get out of this straightjacket and set a better course for US regional policy-making? Two formidable bureaucratic fixations must first be exorcised. The more difficult is to get our Washington planners to abandon their traditional, country-by-country approach which persistently leads them to underestimate the pernicious effects of Soviet adventuring on the perceptions of regional leaders, and hence on power alignments in a region as a whole.

The next is to stop our Washington planners from projecting the present as the future. By focusing on discrete units, rather than systematically approaching a region as a whole, they inevitably turn their evaluations into descriptive state-by-state narratives which simply serve as base lines for straight-line projections. Then they are easily led, against all evidence of history, economics and politics, to the conclusion that the status will remain quo. NSSD-208 suffered from this affliction.

This redoubtable ravelin can only be breached by mandating that IG policy-making groups work within a comprehensive planning matrix that makes assumptions explicit, accounts for variables, and rigorously compares policy options and their medium- and long-term effects. The full use of decision-analysis techniques would permit more accurate assessment of the policy effects of interacting events within a region, and between regions. By tracing out chains of causality among probable political occurrences, important considerations may well become apparent which otherwise would not have shown up in the usual country-narrative approach. Then worst-case scenario testing and sensitivity analyses could help "fine-tune" options and choices in setting regional strategies. For example, cross-impact analysis would help us better understand the repercussions of governments being toppled along vital sea lanes in SWIO. Sensitivity analysis would illuminate the effects on Soviet influence of trading off some development aid for a modest increase in security assistance.

Such analyses take effort and hard thinking, but they can be done and they're worth it. As technical director for the IG Law of the Sea Review, I used multi-attribute utility theory (MAUT) to help cut that Gordian knot of multiple objectives and complex policy choices. I used it again as chairman of the IG Third World Hunger Study to help penetrate the seemingly unfathomable mysteries of our food aid decision-making processes and to emerge with new initiatives for emergency food response and food production. MAUT has now been decreed by NSDD 156 for Food for Progress policy determinations; a historical first for State policy planning. We face regional crises in many places around the world, and I ask that another NSDD be issued mandating the full use of decision-analysis techniques in setting US regional strategies.
